

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NAIROB 07798 261430Z

53

ACTION AF-08

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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1331

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 7798

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MILI, PFOR, SOPN, KE, UG, US

SUBJECT: GOK REQUEST FOR LESS PUBLICITY ON US MILITARY MOVEMENTS
TO AND NEAR KENYA

1. IN COURSE OF JULY 26 CALL AT KENYA DEFENSE MINISTRY
ON OTHER BUSINESS, PERMSEC KIEREINI MADE PLEA TO DCM
FOR LOWER PROFILE USG HANDLING OF PUBLICITY RELEVANT
TO P-3 FLIGHTS TO NAIROBI, US NAVY SHIP VISITS TO
MOMBASA, AND CURRENT PRESENCE IN INDIAN OCEAN OF AIR-
CRAFT CARRIER TASK GROUP. HE SAID EXCESSIVE RELEASE
OF DETAIL ON THESE MILITARY MOVEMENTS ACCOMPANIED BY
SPECULATIVE COMMENT, APPARENTLY EMANATING FROM WASHINGTON,
WERE MAKING IT LOOK AS IF THERE IS A "POSSIBLE WAR BE-
TWEEN UGANDA AND US" RATHER THAN BETWEEN UGANDA AND
KENYA. WHILE HE DID NOT REQUEST THAT WE STOP OR ALTER
PRESENTLY PLANNED MILITARY MOVEMENTS IN THIS AREA, HE
STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THAT THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR RELATIONS
WITH PRESS WITHIN USG HOLD FIRMLY TO POLICY OF DESCRIBING
THESE MILITARY MOVEMENTS AS "ROUTINE" AND TO REFRAIN
FROM PROVIDING FURTHER DETAILS OR COMMENTARY WHETHER
ON "BACKGROUND" OR ANY OTHER BASIS. HE POINTED OUT
THAT SUCH PRESS HANDLING WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH
FACT VISITS TO KENYA BY US NAVY SHIPS AND MILITARY
AIRCRAFT HAD BEEN WELCOMED FOR YEARS ON ROUTINE BASIS
AND THAT KENYA PLANS TO CONTINUE TO WELCOME SIMILAR
SHIP AND AIRCRAFT VISITS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES, IN-
CLUDING FROM SOVIET UNION.

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2. WE WOULD STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT KIEREINI'S REQUEST FOR MINIMAL PUBLICITY ON THESE MOVEMENTS BE SCRUPULOUSLY OBSERVED. DETERRENT EFFECT ON UGANDA AND SOMALIA WOULD NOT BE LOST BY CHARACTERIZING THESE MOVEMENTS AS ROUTINE, AND KENYA WOULD AT SAME TIME AVOID BEING ACCUSED BY OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES OF HAVING GIVEN UP ITS NONALIGNED STATUS. MOREOVER, BELIEVE THAT LOWER PROFILE WOULD LESSEN POSSIBILITY OF SOME SOVIET COUNTERACTION IN AREA. PLEASE ADVISE WHETHER WE MAY GIVE REQUESTED ASSURANCES TO KIEREINI.

3. TEMPORARY DEFENSE LIAISON OFFICER, LT. COL. ANDERSON ALSO ATTENDED THIS MEETING AT DEFENSE MINISTRY AND HAS SEEN THIS MESSAGE.
MARSHALL

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NNN

Message Attributes

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